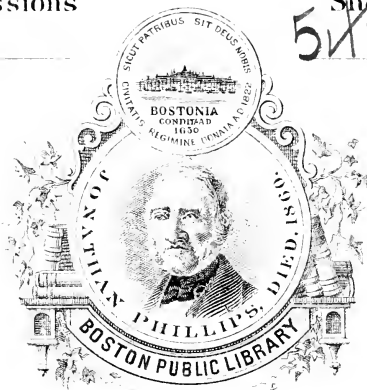


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THE
YOUNG MEN OF THE BIBLE,

CONSIDERED IN

A SERIES OF LECTURES,

BEFORE THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

BY

DISTINGUISHED CLERGYMEN.



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JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

BY REV. NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE UNION (CONGREGATIONAL) CHURCH, ESSEX STREET.

“THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.”—John xxi. 20.

THERE seems to be peculiar encouragement in asking aid of the Master in our endeavors to understand the character of JOHN.

He was most thoroughly known and appreciated by the Saviour, his special regard for him being intended, no doubt, to encourage us in seeking to be specially loved by the great Judge of character. As we go with confidence to a man's most intimate friend for information about him, it would be strange if, in attempting to understand the character of John, one should not implore assistance from Him who bestowed greater proofs of his personal attachment upon this man than upon any other.

In speaking very freely, as preachers are led to do, with regard to the characters of good men recorded in the Bible, it becomes us to be scrupulous

as to the formation and expression of our opinions. We shall know them, we shall converse with them, in heaven; we shall be reminded of our opinions and words respecting them; we shall be glad if all which we said of them was well considered and just, and if we were humble and modest in our views and expressions with regard to these men, whose reputation and influence are as precious to them as ours are to us. I have sometimes thought that many an Old Testament saint would be justified in holding us personally responsible for liberties taken with his character and conduct. But perhaps unjust praise and want of faithful discrimination as to the good and evil in them, is no less an affliction. If Simon Peter in heaven could go out and weep bitterly, it would be at the sight of that bronze image of Jupiter, at Rome, baptised with his name, receiving the worship of deluded nations. If a sword could pierce through the heart of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in heaven, it would be at the prayers and songs addressed to her by many in far greater numbers than to Jesus Christ her Redeemer. For different reasons and with different feelings, the apostle John must be displeased at seeing his character used by the transcendentalists of all times, as a warm place for the incubation of

their philosophies. They invest his character with mysteries of which he knew nothing. May the Young Men at whose invitation I speak, lift their hearts to the every-where-present Jesus, asking him to aid us in obtaining simple and Scriptural views of the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

JOHN, the Evangelist, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. Zebedee was the proprietor of a fishing vessel employed on the lake of Galilee, and when Jesus called his two sons, James and John, to follow him, they were in the vessel with their father, mending their nets. Some of the greatest temporal blessings which God bestows upon us come when we are not looking for them, certainly not laboring after them, but when we are in the discharge of our regular calling. Promotion brings peace of conscience with it, and a sure sense of the divine approbation, if it finds a man quietly and contentedly at the post which God has assigned him. If John had been absent from his boat and nets that morning, seeking, discontentedly, for a higher situation, or listlessly spending his time in places of public resort, he would have missed a visit and a call for which the universe could have afforded him no

compensation. He will forever be grateful that the Saviour's inestimable gifts and calling found him in his fishing boat.

There is no sufficient reason to think that Zebedee and his sons were poor, nor of a degraded condition in life. They employed hired laborers; the mother was one of the women who "ministered" to Christ "of their substance," before and after his death. Jesus on the cross commended his mother to the care of John, which leads us to suppose that he was able to provide for her. We also read that John was personally known to the high priest, and this is given as the reason for his going into the high priest's palace at the Saviour's arraignment. But had he been known to the high priest merely as one, for example, who had supplied his household with food, it could not have been a sufficient reason for presenting himself on such an occasion. We read, however, that the council before whom they were summoned, perceived that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men." This expression must be interpreted in view of the well known truth that, to the learned scribes and doctors of the law, all men who had not had the advantages of Jewish Rabbinical literature, were regarded as incompetent to teach in public, being

ignorant of the learned mysteries with which those scribes and doctors had invested religion.

It is very plain that naturally John was by no means an ordinary man. It was not by a miracle that he was endowed to write as he did ; for it is a beautiful peculiarity of inspiration that it makes use of powers and faculties already bestowed ; and while raising them to a state of elevation beyond the reach of uninspired men, it never forces them into unnatural conditions, but preserves each man's mode of thinking and style, and thus secures variety for the different parts of the Bible ; — which otherwise would be monotonous.

No doubt John's occupation as a fisherman did much for the formation and nurture of his character. Conversant with storms, he became intrepid, — fearless alike of the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people. The scenery of the lake and the contemplative habits of his calling, made him thoughtful, touched the peculiarities of his character, nourished his imagination, gave him the best opportunities to see analogies, to gather illustrations, to commune with God. The sea of Galilee, it is true, was not more than fourteen miles long and eight broad ; yet it was large enough to stimulate adventure, without the disadvantages to character of distant navigation.

It lay very deep, with high, fruitful hills about it. Over them, fragrant winds stole down at night upon the lake. The quiet style of scenery with its rounded outlines and slopes, and with the snowy top of Hermon in the distance, made the region exceedingly fitted for repose. There the young moon appeared with its crescent resting on the hill-top ; or, in her full orbéd splendor, lending her lamp to the fisher's toil. Migratory storks paused along the shores ; the herons and cranes sought food in its waters ; the scarlet flamingo, and the pelican ventured there. Much of the time the stars were mirrored in its deep still bosom, while now and then sudden winds lashed those inland waters into fury, the fiercer for the narrow boundaries which confined them. Here it was that Providence ordained the sources which were to minister strength and beauty to the character of this wonderful and most favored man. There must, of course, have been a predisposition in him to such manifestations of character ; for the beauties of Gennesareth had no such effect on Peter. The storms and the perils made him impulsive and bold ; but every nature has its peculiar constitution, lying back of character, and waiting to be developed by circumstances.

Sometimes it seems to make very little differ-

ence where a young person is brought up, so far as regards the development of the master-passion of the soul, or the prototype lying back of the character, and always sure to infuse into it its own coloring. The child, born and bred in the mountains, will sometimes take but little impress from them, because it has, as it were, placed a sea-shell to its ear, and heard the song of the sea; after which there is no rest to its cravings till it has gone upon the deep. The boy reared by the sea-side is sometimes impatient of its restlessness, its perpetual noise; for him the silent mountains with their depths and heights, take the place of the ocean. But ordinarily the places where we are bred, with their scenery and associations, stamp themselves on the nature of the child. Happy he whose childhood is cast in sight of something which will make him feel,

“———how grand and beautiful is God,
Where man has not intruded on his works,
But left his bright creation unimpaired.”

We would have chosen Gennesareth for the home and haunts of a man whom Jesus was to love.

Let us hasten to correct any feeling which may possibly exist in our minds, that this disciple

was a man of a soft, feminine nature ; for, as we read of him as leaning on Jesus' bosom, we take the impression, perhaps, that there was a sort of tropical languor in his temperament and manner, with a confiding, reposing, and rather a sedentary disposition, wholly unsuited to the battle of life ; that his was a nature made to love and to be loved, because incapable of being roused by any other passion ; his merely sentimental nature subduing every strong impulse, as the great body of waters in his native lake checked the strength of the Jordan, which flowed into it from the north.

We have read the incidents in the life of John without due attention, if this be our opinion of the beloved disciple. We would not be predisposed to think that the Saviour selected such a character as the object of his most peculiar love. We shall find it to be true of one whom Christ thus loved, that strength and beauty are in his character.

What surname did Jesus give him ? The surname in those days was indicative of something peculiar to the individual, either personal or relative. James and John he surnamed " Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder." It is noticeable that he selected these two men from the twelve

to receive a surname — and that, not a name merely as a help to distinguish them from the others, in speaking of them; for they both received the same appellation. The title was evidently drawn from some qualities in the men. It is pleasant to think that the beloved disciple was a son of thunder; that energy and force are required in a character which commands the peculiar love of Christ.

John would not have done credit to his mother had he not been a forceful, resolute man. She mistook the nature of Christ's kingdom, indeed; but she must have been a woman of decision and courage to have appeared before Christ, asking that these her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom. She knew what opinion Christ had of her sons, for they had received his commendation in their surname. She would propose them as prime ministers under King Messiah. Confidence in one's self and in one's own, challenges, at least, attention and consideration. No suggestions of its being too forward or presumptuous, hindered her; — for how can a mother venture too much for her sons? How did she know but that the Messiah waited to have men volunteer to bear the chief responsibilities under him? The sons

themselves may have employed her to speak for them ; — indeed we are told that “ when the ten heard it they were moved with indignation against the two brethren,” as having used means to forestall the Saviour’s selection of his state officers.

We read again : “ And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us.” Here is zeal. An easy and gentle nature would have had more of what some call “ charity,” that is, indifference to right and wrong.

When the Samaritan villagers refused to receive Christ because he was on his way to Jerusalem, it was his disciples, James and John, who said, “ Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did ? ” Such a spirited proposition and summary proceeding are inconsistent with tameness and a soft, sweet temper ; indeed we find nothing in the insired portrayal of his character to suggest that downy, atonic, nerveless, habit of mind and manners which is sometimes attributed to John. — But, he “ leaned on Jesus’ bosom.” This was no more than sitting on the right of the

chairman on a public occasion, or being placed next to your host at table. This leaning was not the act of one who hangs, or lolls, upon another with fondness ; all the disciples at the table leaned on the bosom one of another ; because they reclined at table, resting each on his arm, and the head of one being near the breast of another. This extended posture explains how the woman that was a sinner could stand at Jesus' feet, behind him, and wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kiss his feet and anoint them with the ointment. John was favored with the place at table next to Christ, and the leaning upon him was not indicative of fondness on the part of John, but of regard on the part of Christ.

There is beautiful simplicity and modesty in the account by John of his visit to the sepulchre with Peter at the first news of the resurrection. "So they ran both together ; and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulchre." This might seem like self-praise ; but the sequel teaches otherwise. "And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying ; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the

sepulchre.” He seems to have come forth from the sepulchre, and to have reported the state of things in the tomb. “Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.”

No simple, truthful tale by an unsuspecting, confiding child, ever surpassed this brief story. The quicker speed of John in going to the sepulchre, seems to be mentioned by him merely to set off his want of assurance on arriving there, and to make Peter’s courage the more noticeable. Yet it was not a mere gratification of personal feeling which led to this statement; for while it illustrates the character of John, it has an important bearing on the evidences of the resurrection. Suppose that John had said that he and Peter both ran together to the sepulchre; that he arrived there first; that he went in alone, and found it empty; that Peter came in afterward, and that he confirmed the statement. This would look like eagerness to make the most of every incident, and an attempt to carry the belief of the reader by storm. Nor would it have succeeded so well as the artless, truthful story now on record. John himself, the disciple whom

Jesus loved, was not so confident, at first, that Christ had risen, as to venture into the sepulchre ; he was not sure that the body of Jesus was not still there ; the disciples, then, had not made up a story concerning the resurrection — for the natural dread of going alone into a tomb where a dead body lay, immediately checked the zeal of this beloved disciple in hastening to the spot. Hence he is an honest witness of the resurrection, not a conspirator. He had not agreed to say that Christ was risen, for he did not himself believe it. If he did, he would not have feared to enter the tomb. This beautiful touch unconsciously given by John himself to the portraiture of his own character, will not have escaped your notice. There were thoughts and feelings in the man which made him dread to enter a tomb containing a dead body. Was it so with Peter ? He arrived last, but with the same hardihood with which he went down out of the ship to go to Jesus on the waves, he went directly into the sepulchre alone, and reported to his brother without that Jesus was not there. A sepulchre, a storm at sea, a Sanhedrim, had no power to awe the impetuous soul of Peter ; but in John we see a certain temperament which hesitates reverently at the door of the silent house where

the Saviour sleeps in death. Yet there was no lack of courage in John as compared with Peter. When Christ was apprehended, and was borne away to the palace of the High Priest, Peter followed afar off; the words of a little maid turning the attention of the loungers about the fire, made Peter curse and swear, and deny Christ; while John went with his Master into that terrible scene, as the evening star drops into the same tempestuous cloud which has covered the face of her lord, the sun. Where is Peter, when Jesus hangs upon the tree, and earth and hell are celebrating his supposed defeat? Woman is at the cross;

“—— him who died
Her kiss betrayed not, nor her tongue denied,
E'en when the apostles left him to his doom,
She linger'd near his cross, and watched his tomb.”

There, side by side with the love of woman, and with the mother's love, beats the faithful heart of the beloved disciple. The mother of Zebedee's children is there; but is that a kingly throne where Jesus is? and are those her two sons in royal state, one on His right hand and the other on His left? A change of views with regard to the nature of Messiah's kingdom, it seems, had not alienated her, nor her son; the

sweet spices which she brought very early in the morning of the first day of the week, those touching evidences of simple, transparent honesty, with no thought of fabrication, or guile, were not so odorous as these acts of faithful love which have filled the world with their sweet savor. All that is mighty in woman's love and gentleness, we find in the beloved disciple, associated with the strong qualities of a manly nature.

When he comes to write his Gospel, the first utterance of his soul is no less grand than the first utterance of Moses. Nothing can surpass the sublimity of the first verse of the first chapter of John's Gospel. It is not an overture on a flute stop ; it is like those great strains of the Harlæm organ which the visitor seems to hear far up among the arches of the old church, as soon as the keys are struck. These first words of John are themselves an apocalypse : " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made." His faith, rooted and grounded in love, has become colossal ; he makes no apology, prefixes no explanation, but boldly

asserts the pre-existence of his Lord, and his being at once with God, and yet God. Man has never improved upon this statement; its doctrinal strength has never been impaired.

It is interesting to notice that particular parts of Scripture, in their turn, present themselves at different periods of church history, as having peculiar significance in connection with the religious manifestations of the times.

In our day, and in this region, the tendency, we fear, is to a Confusion of the Two Natures in Christ. The human heart naturally dreads to do that which "all the angels of God" are commanded to do; therefore the effort now seems to be to make of Christ merely an impersonation of the Father; so that, in worshipping Christ, God the Father only shall be worshipped, and the idea of plurality in divine worship shall not be admitted,—the man Christ Jesus standing merely as the shrine in which the Father alone shall be adored. "Christ is divine," it is said, "and must be worshipped;"—but how? and why? Because, they tell us, God uses him to manifest himself, in him, and through him. Thus Christ may be a mere man, or a pre-existent being greatly exalted; but he is not allowed to be in himself a proper object of worship. But he may

be worshipped for the sake of the Father who inhabits him.

Many true believers in Christ, through want of proper discrimination, and in the exercise of charitable feelings, are misled by the worshipful language which is thus applied to Christ; they do not perceive that it passes on beyond Christ, not fixing itself upon him, but upon the Father which is in him.

Against this, the apostle John has warned us, in words each of which seems to have an inspired application to this fundamental error. Immanuel, God with us, is not the Father in human flesh. For, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was '*with* God;' — thus denying that he was merely the Father manifested, the Father changing shape, or assuming a new form; there was an original distinction in the divine nature; "the Word was with God," "in the beginning;" nor was He an effluence, a derived being; for, "the Word was God." We have here the corner-stone of the Christian system, — an eternal distinction, and equality, and a union in one God, of the Father and the Son. Put the question kindly to those who, weary of low, humanitarian views of Christ as unfavorable to piety, and

insufficient to satisfy the wants of their nature, are therefore willing to exalt Christ as an object of divine worship, — put this question to them, in the spirit of love and of a sound mind : Do you believe in an eternal, personal distinction and equality between the Word and the Father ? Encourage them to receive this truth as the only resting place for their souls.

If the reply is that this is a mere speculation, — we answer, It is vital. We see not how there can be vicarious atonement for sin without this personal distinction in the God-head. The Father is represented to us as Lawgiver ; the Word atones, the Spirit applies the atonement to the soul. This is our faith ; the faith of the Christian church ; it is a “ precious faith ; ” its corner stone is “ a tried stone ; ” let us not approve other corner-stones, bearing a close resemblance to ours ; let us offer ours freely, as we have freely received it, through infinite grace, and invite the world to build upon it ; but let us remember that it demands of the human heart large concessions of pride and self-will, and that we are not at liberty to make this straight gate wider, nor this narrow way broader for ourselves, nor for others. “ The same was in the beginning with God,” says John, with singular repeti-

tion ; for he had before asserted it. We may take our choice, to believe in, and worship the Father and the Son, co-eternal, and in all respects equal, or reject their claim on our worship ; but let us not confuse the eternal Word with the Father, and melt and merge his substantive being into what the chemists call a menstruum, to hold deific qualities, and so evade our duty to honor the Son even as we honor the Father.

Beginning with such an inspiring note, John's Gospel enunciates the doctrine of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, in terms equally strong, but with the same sublime silence as to any attempts at explaining incomprehensible truths. All the way through this Gospel, we find the utterance of clear, strong truth, not of philosophy, nor speculation ; neither have we in it any thing of metaphysical analysis, but the full, rounded orb of assured faith.

When we come to the closing part of the Gospel, we find the farewell discourse and prayer of Christ with his disciples, beginning with the fourteenth chapter. Is any part of the New Testament, probably, read more frequently than this? In their most consecrated hours, Christians find themselves instinctively turning to these chapters ; when Christians meet for prayer and holy con-

verse, it is in these passages, where we see the Saviour's innermost heart, that they go in and out and find pasture. Matthew, the sententious, ethical writer of the Sermon on the Mount, Mark, the companion and pupil of Peter, a valuable, brief witness, with his confirming testimony, Luke, the minute historian, he and Matthew the complement one of the other, did not possess a heart so peculiarly congenial with the pathos in the farewell sayings of Christ; for it is not every reed in the meadow which the musician chooses for his instrument; neither can every soil, like one in Switzerland, impart a beautiful tinge to the waters of its lake, yet leave them clear as crystal. God is pleased to adapt himself to the laws and order of his own appointment, and the heart of John was therefore chosen to communicate words from Christ which have in them most of that life in Christ which was hid in God.

Still making good his name of Boanerges, we find this loving disciple in his epistles, uttering words which are a terror to all the advocates of false charity, at the same time that the heart which utters them glows with true love. "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that

abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." "Whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father." Here is distinctness and decision, in matters of faith ; sharpness and severity, surrounded by love. The land of the sugar cane is the soil which yields the acid fruits ; love, true, pure, love to God, always makes a man bold and uncompromising ; he feels no more at liberty to accommodate the truths of God to human wishes than to alter the ecliptic so as to afford certain tribes of the earth longer days, or longer twilights. Who may meddle with the sun's path ? John and Peter said in their first discourse to the Jewish rulers, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

If one lingering doubt remains in any mind as to the highest type of manly character, with its strong, bold qualities of mind and heart, in John, let him go to Patmos, and see this aged man, an exile for Jesus' sake, employed to look, in vision, upon scenes of grandeur and terror, in heaven, earth, and hell, which it must have required moral as well as natural fortitude, and the most robust faith, to behold. There we hear him describe to us

the sight of all heaven at the pierced feet of his Saviour, who is seated on the throne of the universe; and he is not afraid to see, nor to say, that divine worship is in heaven paid to more than one. He depicts scenes of vengeance on wicked nations, and on the souls of lost men in hell, which, he does not shrink to tell us, are followed by the alleluias of all heaven. He sees a part of our race consigned to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, and he utters no remonstrance at the rigors of divine justice, because he sees divine love to the great whole as conspicuous in the punishment of the wicked as in the white-robed companies of heaven, by whom the blood of the covenant had not been counted an unholy thing. Justice is to him as pure, and holy, as mercy; with him the love of God, and the love of Christ is not a doting fondness; it is the one great chord of harmonious music made by striking at once the appropriate major and minor strings. "God is love," is the amazing response made by the combined joys and woes of earth, the bliss of heaven, the endless pains of hell; not, in their results, necessarily, love to every individual, but to the universe as a whole. John was selected and qualified to see and hear these things and

transmit them to all future generations. It is not every inspired man whose natural powers and qualities would have been qualified for such employment. Daniel, that heroic spirit, says, after a certain vision, "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days." At another time he says, "As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me." Once more he tells us, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me unto corruption, and I retained no strength." What then could Daniel have done in Patmos! But how is it that he, who 'stopped the mouths of lions,' was not able to endure the visions of God like John? Hardness is not the only quality which is requisite in useful metals. Cast-iron, with its toughness and rigidity, often fails where the softer, malleable iron will succeed. Gold, the most precious metal, is the most ductile. John had a large share of that element which is enduring because it is, to a certain extent, yielding; a submissive, confiding heart is bolder and stronger than one that can merely resist.

To have intrusted the communications in Patmos to some minds and hearts, even among the

older prophets, or to some of the apostles, would have caused a failure. A miraculous endowment of qualities would have been in violation of the chosen method of God in the selection of his instruments. He only who was capable of such love and confidence toward God that they constituted the absorbing element of his soul, was qualified to hear and to utter, as he did, that "Woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth;" to see blood "even to the horse-bridles," and to depict torments such as no eye but his, among men, had ever been permitted to see. And now he ceases. Listen! The last notes of a Sabbath evening-bell, among the mountains, calling the villagers to the house of prayer, are not more soothing and sweet than his accents: "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let that is athirst Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

If I drop my subject here, with no attempt to gather together these scattered rays of light from the Bible into the poor prism of human analysis and enumeration, but leave all to make its diffused impression upon your minds, I shall do that which the Bible has done in its portraiture of John. His character is itself a Gennesareth, where solemn beauty reigns, but yields appropri-

ately to strong impulses, which would be excessive, but the presence of Jesus, with its "Peace! be still!" controls them. It is only the great powers of nature that are capable of "a great calm."

If one were asked for a specimen of what the Christian religion can do for the whole of a man's nature, he could not answer more effectively than to quote the beloved disciple. When the young are addressed from the pulpit, or by your companions on the subject of personal religion, see, in John, what religion in its full influence over your nature, can do for you. Personal consecration to Christ, the mind enlightened by knowledge, sound principles of conduct at the bottom of all your actions, open before you the way to be specially loved by Christ. Here is an ambition in which there is no danger of excess, nor of error, — to be a disciple whom Jesus loves.

Before I ask your attention to some closing words suggested by my theme, let me, in the name of all the ministers who have addressed you in these lectures, utter one word of counsel, as I feel warranted in doing, to this Young Men's Christian Association. It is the privilege of every one of us, ministers, to observe, that an en-

thusiastic interest in the special objects of this Association is not inconsistent with the first, great duty which every young man owes to the Church with which he is associated. We say this, all of us, from personal observation. We will always cordially lend you our assistance, if needed, to promote the specific objects of your Association ; but let us pray you, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, to bear in mind, that *Churches* are the divinely appointed organization for the elevation and salvation of the race. Make your Christian Associations in the highest degree effective ; but let none of you find your home and rest in them ; let them turn their influence toward the Churches of Christ ; let them be like the Sabbath School, when properly used—a powerful auxiliary to the Church ; seek, as your ultimate end, to strengthen and edify the body of Christ, in its several parts, under its different names ; be, each of you, and seek to make every young man whom you can influence, an intelligent, stable, active member of some evangelical Church. This is the means appointed of God for your own spiritual good, and for your greatest influence upon the world.

There was one moment, and one passing event

in the life of John, upon which all that is now wonderful in him depended for its existence. It was at the moment when Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Had heaven foreseen what would be the consequences of John's response to that call, it might well have kept silence till it was answered, and rightly answered. The right answer was given. There was no procrastination, no "suffer me first" to do anything; immediately he left his father and his nets, forsook all, and followed Christ. I come in the name of John's Master and Saviour, it may be, to some future John among these beloved young men. The eye of Christ is upon this most interesting assembly. Is His heart satisfied with one John? He calls you to all the intimacy of love enjoyed by him. What are the marks of a character such as Jesus loves? Promptness, decision, force, heartiness, constancy, a clear, well defined, simple trust, hatred of error, and love to the sinner, contemplative habits, deep feeling, faithfulness in friendships, nearness to the cross, reverence and awe at sacred things, love to the brethren, simplicity and godly sincerity, and a faith which takes God at his word, and follows him through all the fearful mysteries of revelation and providence. Such was John. "Follow me," said Jesus to

him, one day, as he now says to you. All unconscious of that which awaited him, he rose, left all, and followed Christ. Where is he to night! What is he! Who can begin to speak of it! If it could be disclosed, it would be an 'apocalypse' which no mortal eye could endure to see, no ear could hear. We should fall as dead. What has heaven been, and what has Jesus been, to him! All, all this, is the consequence of prompt, immediate obedience to that word of Christ, "Follow me." The recollection of this hour may be to some of you, all which the memory of that morning, of that fishing boat, of that beckoning hand, and of the voice of Jesus, now is to John. He would have lost all by the spirit of procrastination with which some one of you may now receive the invitation of Christ.

With every friend and follower of John's Saviour and Friend, I now leave a message, as it were, from the beloved disciple: "BUT I TRUST I SHALL SHORTLY SEE THEE, AND WE SHALL SPEAK FACE TO FACE. PEACE BE TO THEE. OUR FRIENDS SALUTE THEE. GREET THE FRIENDS BY NAME." AMEN.



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